



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Reports First Human Case of West Nile Virus in 2008

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health today announced the state's first human case of West Nile virus infection for 2008, according to West Nile Virus Surveillance Coordinator Michelle Feist.

The patient is a male in his 20s who resides in Cass County. The patient was not hospitalized. In addition, one horse in Grand Forks County has been identified with the virus.

“The identification of West Nile virus in a person and a horse is a reminder to all North Dakotans of the importance of taking precautions to protect ourselves from the bites of mosquitoes,” Feist said. “Everyone is at risk of developing illness after being bitten by an infected mosquito; however, people older than 50 are at the greatest risk of developing serious complications from the disease.”

In 2007, 369 human cases of West Nile virus were reported to the Department of Health, including three deaths. In addition, West Nile infection was identified in four horses, 15 birds and seven mosquito pools.

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes, the state health department recommends the following protective measures:

- Use insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, IR 3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or permethrin when outdoors. Always follow the directions on the manufacture's label.
- Limit outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most likely to bite.
- When possible, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts while outside.
- Eliminate stagnant water and leaf debris in containers around homes where mosquitoes can lay their eggs (e.g., buckets, flowerpots, old tires, wading pools and birdbaths).
- Keep mosquitoes from entering your home by repairing screens in windows and doors.
- Keep the grass around your home trimmed.

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

West Nile virus activity will be updated Wednesday mornings each week throughout the West Nile virus season on the Department of Health's West Nile virus website at www.ndhealth.gov/wnv.

For more information, contact Michelle Feist, North Dakota Department of Health, at 800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378.

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Policy for Release of Information Concerning West Nile Virus Cases

The North Dakota Department of Health strives to protect the identity and the privacy of people who are infected with diseases, including West Nile virus, while at the same time protecting the public's health. The following list identifies the information the Department of Health will release to the media and/or public concerning West Nile virus cases.

West Nile Virus Cases

- Number of cases per county
- Number of males and females statewide
- Number hospitalized statewide
- Number of cases by age group statewide
 - Younger than 10
 - Ages 10 to 19
 - Ages 20 to 29
 - Ages 30 to 39
 - Ages 40 to 49
 - Ages 50 to 59
 - Age 60 and older

West Nile Virus Deaths

- Region of the state in which the person resided
- Age group of the person
- The person's gender
- If the person had any underlying medical conditions

Information about a West Nile virus death will be released only after the department has consulted with the patient's health-care provider and after the provider has communicated with the patient's family. The local public health unit in which the person resided also will be notified prior to release of information.

If you have any questions, please contact Loreeta Canton or Stacy Eberl, North Dakota Department of Health Office of Public Information, at 701.328.2372.

Communication policy developed 2002; updated 2006.

Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.